

Autistic Mental Health & Well-Being

6-Hour Introductory Virtual Training

This workshop is designed to highlight special considerations for supporting the mental health and well-being of Autistic people. Content will cover information related to Autistic neurology including style of thinking and different ways a brain might handle information. The workshop will also delve into the impact of environmental stressors and other types of trauma commonly experienced by people with Autism. The presenters bring everything together with a variety of tips that can lead to improved mental health & well-being for Autistic people. This virtual 6-hour workshop will give you a foundation of shared knowledge important for all – Autistic individual, parent, teacher, support worker, therapist or anyone interested in this topic.

(Note: Identity-first language used intentionally as it is the preference of most Autistics.)

 www.autismgreaterwi.org

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Workshop Includes:

1 Foundations of Autistic Neurology

To support autistic mental health and wellness, it is important to understand the particular style of thinking and the way the autistic brain handles information. As a mental health provider and an autistic herself, Judy understands intimately the pitfalls when people try to support the mental health and wellness of an autistic based on who they ARE NOT – their “deficits” when measured with the neuromajority yardstick of “normal.” If you are autistic or an ally please know there is a better way! In this presentation Judy starts with who autistic people ARE and how they comfortably function, going over key elements of taking in, processing, storing and retrieving information along with autistic thinking style. Numerous examples are included so autistic individuals and their allies will come to understand that supporting mental health and wellness can only happen when autistics are honored for who they ARE and who they want to be in this world.

2 Stressors, Trauma, & Autism

To support autistic mental health and wellness, it is important to understand the specific stressors that individuals on the autism spectrum often experience. The cumulative impact of these stressors over the course of a day, and a lifetime, can have a traumatic impact and lead to activation of survival responses. In this presentation, Sharon and Lisa look at the effects of trauma on the brain, and how the biology of the autistic brain can result in it being particularly sensitive to stressors and trauma. As neuromajority mental health therapists, Sharon and Lisa draw upon their years of experience supporting clients on the autism spectrum. Throughout their presentation, Lisa and Sharon will share numerous quotes and examples from autistic people, highlighting what autistic people have taught them about their experience with stress and trauma.

3 Autistic Neurology & Supporting Mental Health

To support autistic mental health and wellness, we need to be aware of the possible differences in perception and processing of emotions that occur for autistic people. Once we know these differences, as well as the information covered in Part 1 and Part 2 of this series, then, we can look at supporting autistic mental health. In this presentation, Sharon and Lisa will examine the role that interoception and neuroception play in autistic mental health. Then, they will share a variety of tips that can lead to improved mental health and well-being for autistic people. As neuromajority mental health therapists, Sharon and Lisa draw upon their years of experience supporting clients on the autism spectrum. Throughout their presentation, Lisa and Sharon will share numerous quotes and examples from autistic people, highlighting what autistic people have taught them about their experience with stress and trauma.

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Meet the Presenters



Judy Endow, LCSW, author and international speaker on a variety of autism-related topics, has written numerous articles and books, including award winners: *Learning the Hidden Curriculum: The Odyssey of One Autistic Adult* and *Paper Words and Discovering and Living with My Autism*. As a person who lived some of her early years in an institution, Endow has emerged as a leader in the autism community. A resource specialist and a clinician at Common Threads Family Resource Center in McFarland, WI for several years, she received the Autism Society of America's Cathy Pratt Professional of the Year Award — the first autistic person to receive this prestigious national award. Endow was featured in the New York Times' Patient Voices, and was honored by The Art of Autism as one of the most influential bloggers on the web. Endow has made over 400 presentations all over the world.



Sharon Hammer, MS, LPC is a Mental Health and Educational Consultant and a Licensed Professional Counselor. She has over 20-years of experience working with children and individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. Sharon is a partner at Imagine a Child's Capacity, where she provides training and consultation to schools, community members, and parents. Sharon has co-authored two books and DVDs about using technology to support individuals with autism, entitled *Lights! Camera! Autism!* With Star Cinema, Sharon co-created the first "Sensory Friendly" movie going experience in the state of Wisconsin. Sharon is committed to increasing awareness and possibilities throughout the community for individuals on the spectrum.



Lisa Hoeme MS, LPC, CRC, CYKF, is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Consultant at Imagine a Child's Capacity. She has over 18 years of clinical experience serving an expansive range individuals and families, including those with autism, Down syndrome, traumatic brain injury, attention difficulties, obsessive compulsive disorder, anxiety and depression. In her work as a consultant she provides training and consultation to schools, community agencies, and parents. Lisa also provides psychotherapy, working with clients in home, clinic and group settings and serves as a mental health consultant for the Reach Dane Head Start program. Lisa is committed to helping those she supports to achieve personal growth and overall well-being using a positive, individualized and person-centered approach.